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**NEWS From:**

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**Congressman Mike Honda**

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**FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA**

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For Immediate Release  
May 8, 2002

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### **Honda Joins with Sec. Mineta to Kickoff APA Heritage Month**

**Washington, DC-** Today, U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose) joined with U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Norman Y. Mineta to begin Asian Pacific Heritage Month—a celebration of Asian Pacific American contributions to America by speaking to a group of federal employees and other invited guests at the Department of Transportation Headquarters in Washington DC. Mineta and Honda, both of whom were sent to Internment camps for Japanese Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1942, went on to become national leaders on civil rights and social justice as a result of their experiences as young men. Today's event was hosted by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Civil Rights and also featured CBS News correspondent, Joie Chen.

**“For over one hundred years, Asian Pacific Americans have sacrificed and contributed greatly to continued growth and prosperity in the United States,”** said Honda. **“The history of Asians in America has always involved a dual current of discrimination and assimilation that we must continue to approach with care. I look forward to working with Secretary Mineta and the many vibrant Asian communities across the nation to continue our fight for justice, diversity and equal opportunity.”**

In June 1977, Representatives Frank Horton of New York and then Congressman Norman Y. Mineta, introduced a House resolution that called upon the president to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian/Pacific Heritage Week. The following month, Senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both were passed. On October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution designating the annual celebration.

In May 1990, the holiday was expanded further when President George H. W. Bush designated May to be Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese immigrants to the United States in 1843. Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is celebrated with community festivals, government-sponsored activities, and educational activities for students. The theme for 2002 is "Unity in Freedom."

**“Asian Pacific American Heritage Month represents a unique opportunity for all of us to bring the rich mosaic of our heritage together to celebrate our many accomplishments,”** added Honda. **“As a community, we must remember where we have been, celebrate where we are going, and chart a course for the distances we have yet to realize, if we are to overcome the obstacles still remain before us and continue to make a difference in the building of this great nation.”**